



Washington State Department of Agriculture

News Release

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Updated WSDA direct farm marketing book available

OLYMPIA – With today's increasingly competitive food and agricultural markets, more farmers are turning to direct market sales to capture a higher percentage of the retail food dollar. To help farmers who want to enter this growing market, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has updated its guide to direct farm marketing.

Commonly called *The Green Book*, for its green cover, the 116-page handbook provides regulatory and marketing advice for farmers interested in selling at farmers markets and roadside stands or directly to local consumers, grocery stores, cafeterias and restaurants.

"This is a valuable resource for farmers, county health departments, farmers market managers, agricultural professionals and anyone who wants to know the ins and outs of selling farm products direct to consumers," said Kelli Sanger, coordinator, Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program at WSDA.

The expanded version of *The Green Book* explains the basics of what growers need to know about food safety, health, business, labor and tax issues. There are sections on selling specific products, such as eggs, fish and shellfish, fruits and vegetables, honey, milk and dairy, and information on food stamps, nutrition programs, signage and labeling. It also covers direct marketing strategies that farmers can use to sell their products, such as selling to restaurants, at farmers markets, on-farm sales, Internet sales, and Community Supported Agriculture programs. An extensive list of publications and organizations related to the topics is included.

"Direct marketing is growing in popularity with farmers across the state, and consumers are responding with interest as well," Sanger said.

Annual sales at the 90 farmers markets across the state exceed \$22 million and the number of markets has increased by 61 percent since 1997.

To get a free copy of *The Green Book*, send your address via e-mail to smallfarms@agr.wa.gov, phone Sanger at (360) 902-2057, or download it from the Internet at <http://www.agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/greenbook.htm>.

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